

## Stevensville Town Council Meeting Minutes

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 08, 2020**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call  
Mayor Dewey called the meeting to order. Councilmembers Devlin, Michalson and Vick were present. Councilmember Holcomb had an excused absence this meeting.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Public Comments  
No public comment.
4. Approval of Minutes  
No approval of minutes, Ms. Berthoud currently into July meetings and August meetings.
5. Approval of Bi-Weekly Claims
  - a. Claims #16229-16270  
Update to the claims, #16283.  
Councilmember Michalson: made a motion to approve claims 16229-16283.  
Councilmember Vick: 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion.  
Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Mr. Michalson and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Vick. Council comments?  
Councilmember Michalson: Robert, claim on 16260 HDR engineering misc. service contract for Burnt Fork Estates, what is that for? Is that a staff report?  
Mayor Dewey: I can answer that, yes that is correct zoning administration services correct so that is the running bill for evaluation of the proposal of complete on the towns behalf and working with staff to compile the staff report, so it is multi-faceted. As we move through that project there will be additional expenses from HDR.  
Councilmember Michalson: with HDR is this the contract that we approved in June or July?  
For \$61,000.00  
Mayor Dewey: it is part of the master services agreement. I believe that was for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street improvements, this isn't under necessarily a task order more of an on demand need from the administration to take care of that project for us it is under the master services agreement.  
Councilmember Michalson: what is the 3<sup>rd</sup> street for \$8999?  
Mayor Dewey: that is for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street improvements and the design.  
Councilmember Michalson: so that has nothing to do with the \$61,000?  
Mayor Dewey: yes, it is part of the \$61,000. You will see the water system report there that is the contract that you awarded for that project.  
Councilmember Michalson: okay, above that, #16259 Verizon wireless is that for the second building official?  
Mayor Dewey: yes, it takes a while to pull up a line or a ball park bill, the next bill will look less.

Councilmember Michalson: I thought when we signed the contract with First Call it was supposed to take a lot of that away.

Mayor Dewey: We haven't implemented the phone system either, we just did that two weeks ago. It will take a minute to get phones installed. Any further comments on the claims? Any public comment on the claims? Hearing none I will call for the vote, Ms. Berthoud.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Michalson: aye.

Councilmember Vick: aye.

Mayor Dewey: motion passes unanimously.

## 6. Administrative Reports

### a. Airport

Robert gave an airport report. Knife River is completing the project.

Mayor Dewey: any questions on the airport?

### b. Building Department

Report is in the packet.

### c. Finance

Robert gave a report on the CARES funding, got to fill it out and turn it in on the 25<sup>th</sup>. We are asking for reimbursement of police department wages and health care. Also, some reimbursement for cleaning. Looking at a better sound system for the court, computers for the cop cars.

Mayor Dewey: any questions for Robert on the finance report? Thank you, Robert.

### d. Fire Department

Chief Motley: in your packet are the stats. Chief Motley gave his report from the information provided in the packet.

### e. Parks & Recreation

Bobby: gave his report from the information provided in the packet.

### f. Police Department

Chief Marble: we are still going through the hiring process hopefully by the end of October. Chief Marble gave his report from the information provided in the packet.

Councilmember Michalson: you were asking a week or so ago in the Ravalli newspaper for some help on a stolen vehicle. Two young people were chased by law enforcement.

Chief Marble: it is not the vehicles were stolen from Stevensville. We did have a number of vehicle trespasses. The suspects are at large.

Mayor Dewey; any other questions? Okay thanks Chief.

### g. Public Works

Report is in the packet.

## 7. Guests

a. Brian Osowski, AMKO Advisors - RE: Water/Sewer Bond Re-funding Analysis

Mayor Dewey: introduced Brian from AMKO advisors on the water and sewer bonds.

Brian: Mayor and council members I appreciate the chance to meet with you. Brian gave a background on his company. I was visiting with Robert and one of the things that we have been working with other municipalities. Refinancing some notes that were at a higher interest rates. We just refinanced the Town of Redlodge saving them about \$2 million dollars. I had run some analysis on the sewer and the water, the city could save about \$700,000 dollars. Similar to refinancing a home. Those savings are net to the city. We put the package together put it out to the lenders. Open up for any questions that you might have?

Mayor Dewey: any questions from council?

Brian: the bids will come in front of council where you will be able to say no or move forth with the bids.

Mayor Dewey: at this inductor, given the information that you were given tonight are there any objections from council on the issue of moving forward and at least entertain the idea of having our bonds re-bid and bringing this forward as a formal agenda item at a later date.

Councilmember Michalson: Brandon, I don't think that it can hurt what do we have to lose?

Mayor Dewey: I agree. Okay, catch that Brian?

Brian: thank you I look forward to bringing the bids back to council and working with Robert.

Mayor Dewey: we will move on from this item and have our folks get in touch with you.

Councilmember Michalson: I have a question for Brian, looking at your record you guys pretty much do this will all municipal governments?

Brian: as far as the USDA, yes, we work with school districts, counties from different types of bond issuances. As far as USDA we have done this for at least 50 different entities.

Councilmember Michalson: okay, thank you.

Mayor Dewey: any further questions?

8. Correspondence

None

9. Public Hearings

None

10. Unfinished Business

a. Discussion/Workshop: Resolution No. 387E, amending Town Council Rules

Mayor Dewey introduced unfinished business 10(a). You requested a committee of a whole meeting to review time limits exploration from Mr. Vick. A possible change regarding vacancy

replacement from Mr. Michalson. And perhaps another issue that you guys wanted to look at in town council rules. So you requested that COW meeting given the brevity of tonight's agenda we thought we would go ahead and schedule a workshop tonight for you folks given the time it is only 20 minutes to eight so we have ample time to make any changes that you would like to make and the administration and go forward in creating the document for approval under resolution 387E so this is your time even though we are at a council meeting there is nothing prohibiting you from workshopping this tonight getting some work done before you take on the next two items on your agenda which it should be pretty brief.

Councilmember Michalson: correct me if I am wrong but Dempsey didn't you still have a COW meeting when all of us were here?

Councilmember Vick: the intent to kind of use this section as a COIW meeting with that said I would rather have the COW meeting as a whole and be able to discuss on this.

Mayor Dewey: so, when you say that you would like all 4 council members present? So just on the topic of COW meetings and if that is the direction that the council wants to go tonight. I will tell you that it is getting increasingly difficult to get meetings scheduled we are for sure able to use this room two times a month for our regular council meetings anything outside of that we are at the mercy of the program director at the library. I can't tell you tonight what that looks like in the future given that on a daily basis we see around a dozen cases added to Ravalli county case load in terms of COVIDS. So, I don't know what the future holds so just keep that in the back of your mind, and something that I will address in the executive report is the potential meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup>. We are venue short and time short and it is getting difficult getting all four of you in a room at the same time and also accommodate the public. So just keep that in mind, when making decisions on other meetings when we do the opportunity to get together, I appreciate your indulgence in best utilizing that time. Is there anything further on resolution 387E? Otherwise, we will reach out for availability and see what we can get scheduled.

Councilmember Devlin: I feel that this has come up several times and there is always a reason why we have to kick it down so I think, is this something we want to pursue or not, I think that this is on the table the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> time now over several months. I mean we still have a COW meeting agenda item from February that we haven't revisited and that is our purchasing policy and I think that is an item that should take precedence considering the contradictions and that has led to a recall situation. And that has never been brought up again. So, if we are looking at this, we keep bringing it up and throwing it down the road I think we need to make a decision on the times and the importance of them and what we are going to do moving forward.

Councilmember Michalson: I agree with you Jaime I think that the purchasing policy is of much more of importance to go to a COW meeting than these two I know the public comment one could be brought up but as far as the one that I brought up I don't mind just letting that die and leave it the way that it is.

Councilmember Devlin: thank you Bob.

Mayor Dewey: so, I am hearing wait until the entire council can get together, I am hearing are we serious or not serious about doing this and I hear yes and no.

Councilmember Devlin: I make a motion to strike both of these.

Mayor Dewey: okay.

Councilmember Vick: I 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Dewey; Ms. Devlin has moved to remove the agenda item and Mr. Vick 2<sup>nd</sup>. Council discussion?> Public Comment? Hearing none Ms. Berthoud would you call for the vote.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Michalson: aye.

Councilmember Vick: aye.

Mayor Dewey: that resolved.

## 11. New Business

### a. Discussion/Decision: Resolution 483, adopting fees for the Parks & Recreation 2020 Scarecrow Festival

Mayor Dewey introduced new business item (a).

Councilmember Vick: I make a motion to adopt resolution 483.

Councilmember Devlin: I 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Mr. Vick and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Devlin. Council discussion? Public Comment? Hearing none Ms. Berthoud would you call for the vote.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Michalson: aye.

Councilmember Vick: aye.

Mayor Dewey: motion passes.

### b. Discussion/Decision: Public Works General Labor/Operator Position Description

Mayor Dewey introduced new business item (b). in your council communications in the packet, we discussed the staffing difficulties in the public works department due to COVID. Needless to say, we need somebody who is a jack of all trades and that can step up when needed. We advertised that position and we had an applicant and we hired him. One thing that is coming up is fall clean up and so you will see some changes to that. So, what we are saying is that we need that on call person. Job description is in front of you tonight.

Councilmember Michalson: is this position some times 8 hours a week and sometimes 30 hours a week?

Mayor Dewey: that is correct.

Councilmember Michalson: no set time?

Mayor Dewey: no set time, of course it is budget dependent based on funding so when this person is covering COVID related absences CARES is reimbursing us for those so after December 30<sup>th</sup> we won't have that luxury or we are assuming that but of course we sensitive to what we have for budgeted funds but we want to make sure that services the continuity of services is there. Correct it may be that we may not use them for a few weeks and then we get a big dump of snow and then they have to work a full 40-hour week to help us keep up with plowing. That situation could unfold.

Councilmember Michalson: you really couldn't budget for it because you don't know what they are working?

Mayor Dewey: no but what we can say is once we have the position established and we know we can say that this is the number of hours we have for this person over a years' time or this is the number of hours that we expect or we may need and we do have those over time contingencies in the budget and that will help reduce those over time uses.

Councilmember Michalson: I guess what I would like to see is it going into a full-time position, I think those guys, a long time before you even came Brandon, you can attest, George and them guys have always been short handed down there they are always playing catch up.

Mayor Dewey: I don't disagree with you on that I can't tell you that the budget could facilitate having a full time equivalent all though we could evaluate that if you recall in the fiscal year 20 budget, I did propose a full-time addition to the public works department and that was cut and instead the public works department was given two seasonal workers based off of the two seasonal works we would be less and could utilize this person more in the summer time. I guess for right now my advice is that the council let this ride on some training wheels and then as we evaluate the budget in six months you could come back and say that we need to migrate this into a fulltime position or add a full-time position to the department. We do think that the flexibility of having this prn around on our busy times of the year will be advantages and sensitive to the budget that the tax payers are funding.

Councilmember Michalson: sounds good, thank you.

Mayor Dewey: do I hear a motion to approve the job description?

Councilmember Devlin: I make a motion.

Councilmember Vick: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Dewey: Me. Devlin makes the motion and Mr. Vick 2<sup>nd</sup>. Is there any further discussion from council? Public comment? With no public comment and no further council discussion I will have Ms. Berthoud call for the vote.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Michalson: aye.

Councilmember Vick: aye.

Mayor Dewey: thank you.



## 12. Executive Report

Mayor Dewey gave his executive report, as just discussed in the last agenda item we did have a COVID scare if you will within the organization were one of our employees was in contact with a positive test. Of course, we learned this information on a Friday night at six o'clock and I don't know if you know this or not but public health doesn't answer their phone on Friday evenings or Saturday or Sundays. Nor does the 911 center have an alternate contact number for that center so you are at the weekend mercy public health related until Monday morning at 9:00 a.m. non the less we thought that precautionary measures were necessary and we did our best to provide updates organization wide to the council as we could and I think that those were effected and we set a precedence that email really the way we are going to push information through the organization and we did find some holes in that as well but we have addressed those. I do believe that we tripped the phone tree Friday or Saturday morning the council received emails Friday night and you were the exception to the phone tree the rest of the organization we utilized the phone tree for a COVID response so that was good. All in all, I think that we handled the situation as best as we could given the lack of guidance from public health at the time and the unknowing of what we were expected to do as an organization we were some what in the dark fortunately I had colleagues in other municipalities close by who have far more staff than we do and are going to run into a situation and I was leaning on them Friday night on what to do. We made a decision to quarantine roughly 10 people in our organization to not report to work until we could get a hold of public health on Monday morning and know the status and so that then led us to closing Monday evening and really had two people that could run the office and one at public works and we wanted to take precautions in the office on Monday I can say that sanitation for COVID is not cheap and luckily it is a CARES covered expenditure and you will see a bill for \$4000 forward to the council to clean city hall and public works facility and of course we will send that into CARES for reimbursement and there is no doubt they will reimburse us for that. To drive this whole thing home our staff did wonderful in being adaptable we appreciate the councils support through the situation and the publics support and concern for our staff I can tell you that I think that if the situation was to unfold again for our organization we will handle it appropriately and in the same manner there is a difference toady than there was this time last week however and that is that we have really cracked down on the use of masks in our offices and in our facilities and we have done a better job adhering to social distancing and those other precautions that public health has recommended and in fact when we finally did get a hold of public health and explained to them the reason, they explained to us that we should have been doing it all along and to that we admit to that we may have been laxed on the mask wearing and some other things in our organization and we realize that we are expected to set an example to the rest of the community, we also know from experience that these things are effective in containing the spread of the virus you will see the administration demonstrate best practices with Corona Virus and its spread. I guess to close that topic we did get a hold of public health on Monday morning about the situation, released our 9 employees from quarantine except for one, that person is under what they call a work quarantine where they are permitted to come to work but they must isolate from everyone else in the organization. Their work station was moved to a facility where no one else goes to and the reason that they are under a work quarantine is that person is the only one certified to operate our infrastructure. You can probably connect the dots and figure out who that is for that person's privacy I am not going to divulge. That person is permitted to go to work and home. Hopefully soon that person is released from quarantine

soon. Staff and councilmember Devlin have attended the league of cities and town's conference, it is a virtual conference cost us \$75.00 per staff most of the staff is attending through virtual in the office we are not losing 3-4 days of staff this week which ordinarily we would have, instead they are able to attend the classes and get their brakes and get their work done. Good information being shared at the conference. I have been able to attend and share some of the things that we are doing and have received nothing but positive feed back in the direction that our community is going. I hope that Ms. Devlin. This was her first conference and so far, I hope that you are finding it worthwhile. This week the final budget document all though you adopted your final budget in July it takes us a little time to incorporate final changes into the document and make it look really pretty for the public and the state of course. We met the deadline in terms of reporting to the state if you recall last time that deadline was not met because the budget was not adopted until December, we have successfully submitted the budget on time on October 1st. in addition you will see that budget on line under town budgets and we were able to upload budgets back to fiscal year 12/13 on our website so we have a long history of budgets on our website now comparing to relative to what we have electronically we have a good chunk of budgets on our website for people to go back and compare or have questions about the budget it is all on the website and we are going to continue to push more and more onto our website and that is a thing that they are pushing through CARES is making documentation available on the website so folks don't have to come to town hall. Next a quick head up you will see a press release come from town hall in regards to a statement on infrastructure projects that we are going to push over the next few year and going into this winter and our next budget cycle some of those infrastructure projects that we are going to bring forward to you will come as soon as your next meeting in two weeks one of those is the final set of plans for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street improvements as you are aware we spent some money on that project and we hope to have those plans in our hands ready for your review by your next meeting so you will see an item on your agenda that the timing is up and it is getting close. So, you will see an item on your agenda and we will get those plans in the packet as soon as we can we are still coordinating with HDR to get those electronic plans into the packet for you it may not be the Thursday but will hopefully be Tuesday when your claims go into the packet. We will keep you updated on that, but you can expect to see those plans and provide input of course we consider public input as well those plans are very straight forward in terms of what we plan to do with eat 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and rehabilitate that road way and there are also some other projects tied into that project that you will see as well and the other project that we are going to push through is a sewer main here in town and you will see that task order as well. That covers the business, the last thing that I need to address some things in the paper this week, this is not a campaign activity by any means it is more or less correcting the record as council minutes and official documents are sited in some of these adds, bear with me. There is a line in the October 7<sup>th</sup> Bitterroot Star there is an add paid for by the committee to recall the mayor. It states that the mayor refused to allow council and the public to discuss or approve the mill levies from the county officials which could have affected the tax payer, town council minutes of September. If it was mentioned in the minutes of September, October, December 2019 if it was in the minutes of September, October, and December then it was discussed at length by the council the mayor did not refuse to allow council or the public to discuss or approve mill levies that was incorporated into the fiscal year budget for that year, the budget document there was a chart on mill levies there was nothing hiding in that regard and further we followed the same practice that we always follow and Mr. Underwood can attest to that there was some confusion on what process to follow but ultimately we followed the same process as what we followed in past years administrations on getting the levies down to the county.



Largely the confusion was the council did not approve the city's budget until December and the mills were due in September so no the mayor did not refuse to allow council or the public to discuss this. There is an ethics issue in here that says last summer in 2019 that the mayor had the water turned off during the night of a paraplegic's recovering from a gunshot wound his pregnant wife had to go to city hall and pay \$50 to have it turned on a member of the community asked that he refund the \$50 and the mayor refused city council minutes July 22, 2019. When this was brought up to the town council in July 2019, I remained silent on the issue largely it wasn't appropriate to respond in the public comment portion I have since clarified to those that have asked me about that situation and what exactly happened there. If you recall it was during our water crisis when our well system was quickly running out of water, at that time the water emergency we told all of our citizens through our robo call system no one was allowed to water outdoors that was given to everyone every customer that we have, the public works supervisor then during that period when he would receive alarms from the well system saying that we were running out of water he would come into town sometimes two three in the morning as we were dropping into feet in the reservoir of water he would drive around town and anyone that had their sprinklers running he would turn off the sprinkler timer if it was accessible and if it wasn't accessible we would turn their water off. He did that based on the policy that we took at the time to deal with the water emergency we did not look up who lived where in the middle of the night we did not know who lived where in the middle of the night we shut their water off if they were in violation. And we charged everyone based on policy a \$50 reconnect fee because that is the policy everyone gets charged the same rate. IN this situation the mayor did not have the water shut off in the middle of the night I did not know who lived there in fact I may have been in bed myself; the public works supervisor made the decision to shut the water off rightly so, it was determined that the land lord failed to communicate that the outdoor watering was prohibited all though the land lord received three messages from town hall and that was verified. So, I think what is trying to be implied is I was trying to be malicious somehow and I don't appreciate it that was not the intent at all, they were in violation of the water shut off when this individual's wife came to city hall to pay the fee, I remember dealing with the individual she did not identify herself and so how am I suppose to know? I don't know where every two thousand residents in the city live, I am sorry I would like to but I just don't especially when half of them are renters. So, I think that this is listed and I am bringing this up tonight because it's an attack on the mayor and on actions that this administration took in good faith this is not an attack on me as much as it is on my department heads and those people that you expect to carry out policy you set the policy and we execute it and then things like this show up it is malicious it is not an ethics issue on my part this thing in the paper is an ethics issue on who published it. The next thing is in terms of the audit I just want to clarify when this audit occurred it says a sample of the towns visa credit card payments of \$2540 did not have accurate documentation. This was an audit in 2019 this was the audit covering year fiscal year 17/18 any 6 months of my administration, I did not take office until January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2018, for 6 months we had no control over what receipts were tracked I only had control over the other 6 months I can't tell you when these occurred but as soon as happened and mind you the credit card bill is \$10,000 a month sometimes. So, this is small amount, when it comes to tax payers, we corrected it, fixed the issue. It also accused that the mayor sent altered documents in regards to increasing lighting district taxes that is false we didn't send any altered documents we sent exactly what the council approved. What happened in this situation the council didn't fully understand what they had approved and part of that falls on me because we didn't clearly explain it to them, we felt that when the council at the time voted they understood what they were voting on. We didn't to send altered documents to the county in

terms of lighting district taxes that would be fraudulent and that is not something that this administration would have done. So, again I realize that this add was trying to attack me as the mayor but instead but the result is that you knocked the teeth out of the administration and the trust that they have in the community and the rest of the folds at city hall it is not fair it is unethical. So, I guess in closing I will leave it at that I am not sure what they are after, it says that an independent audit found the mayor violated numerous Montana codes including but not limited to several funds that exceeded fifty to two hundred percent cash reserve balance as specified by Montana law some are as high as three hundred and forty percent I don't believe that the audit found the mayor violated codes we had those cash reserves from not budgeting appropriate funds we didn't budget for cash that we had in the bank we go through this we bring a budget amendment forward and let you know that we have cash in the bank and it needs to be appropriated or spent we just cant keep it. Remember I am sure that the 2019 independent audit covered the fiscal year 17/18. So, it wasn't entirely under my administration that these infractions occurred. Someone else's administration as well, I just wanted to clarify on the record for folks if someone decides to go forward and to continue to badger the administration it can do so with these council minutes as actually as they have other council minutes with that, I appreciate your patience as I work through that. They needed to be addressed.

### 13. Town Council Comments

Councilmember Devlin: I just wanted to she is not here tonight and I fully intended to send her an email but I have been attending this conference as you stated all week has been absolutely amazing, I understand that Laura went in and cleaned the offices and I wanted to extend my think you to her that was above and beyond.

Mayor Dewey: just to clarify, she coordinated it for us. For a company to come in and do that.

Councilmember Devlin: thank you for that. Robert it donned on me today I am kind of embarrassed to say today that I had a light bulb moment when you were going over the airport your report you are doing that on a volunteer basis after you are taking care of the finances of the town after your personal like, this is a big job that you have taken on and I don't know that you have received the recognition you deserve for doing that we can't find a person to take that job on even paid, and you are doing it as a volunteer and I can't tell you how much that means to me and our community. Thank you and again I apologize I didn't recognize that until just tonight. So, I wanted to take a moment to appreciate it. Back to the conference I don't know if either one of you attended it but it has so many topics on there and they are going to be able to be viewed for the next 6 months it is very enlightening what I noticed to is there are chat rooms and you can talk to whoever but allot of the communities there is team effort a bragging right of who you are there with what town you represent I really like to see that with the town of Stevensville we have some of that lacking I appreciate you paying and extending that it has extremely insightful and in think there are benefits for the year to come but for years to come. I appreciate that.

### 14. Board Reports

None, P&Z are trying to meet.

### 15. Adjournment

Mayor Dewey: there was a COW meeting scheduled on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October which is a Tuesday we are kind of down to the wire and we have discovered that this facility is not available for that meeting if you

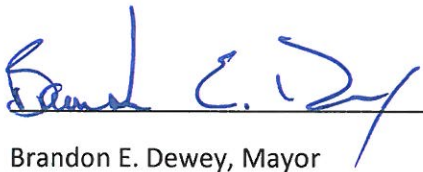
want to move forward with that 10-13 meeting, we are down to town hall with no public admittance it would just be us because that is all we can fit in the room or a virtual meeting or an alternative date. If you want to indicate tonight or we can reach out to you in the morning and survey the council what the preference is.

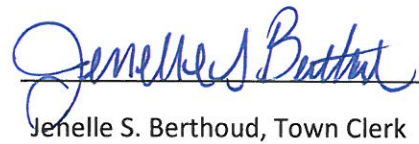
Councilmember Devlin: I think because Robin is not here let's survey it in the morning.

Mayor Dewey: we will send an email out to the council in the morning and will present the three options and advise us on what is your preference. With that we will adjourn that meeting it is 8:20.

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brandon E. Dewey, Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk